

YVONNE C. MORRIS
DIRECTOR, TITAN MISSILE MUSEUM



Yvonne C. Morris, director of the Titan Missile Museum since October 2004, brings a very personal perspective to her job. As a captain in the United States Air Force, she was one of the Missile Combat Crew Commanders responsible for missile site 571-7, which is now the Titan Missile Museum. When Yvonne talks about the missile museum, it is real. She lived it.

She was commissioned through the Air Force ROTC program at the University of Virginia (UVA). While in college, Yvonne was selected to be among the first group of women recruited by the Air Force in 1978 for duty in the Titan II system. She received a Bachelor of Arts Degree with Distinction in Speech and Communications in 1980 from UVA. In 1981, after graduating with distinction from Missile Launch Officer Training, Yvonne was assigned to the 390th Strategic Missile Wing (SMW) at Davis Monthan AFB, Tucson, Arizona. During her assignment with the 390th SMW, Yvonne served as a Missile Combat Crew Commander and instructor. Yvonne trained other crew commanders, managed combat crew training for the entire Wing, and served as an advisor to the Wing Commander and his Battle Staff. Among the launch facilities where Yvonne and her crew pulled alerts was missile site 571-7 at the Titan Missile Museum.

After she left the Air Force in 1985, Yvonne was a legal researcher for the Civil Division of the Pima County Attorney's Office where she wrote appellate briefs in civil rights cases for attorneys appearing before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Putting her Air Force training to good use, she began volunteering as a Docent and Instructor at the Titan Missile Museum in 1998. In 2000, she was appointed to the Board of Trustees of the Arizona Aerospace Foundation. In 2002, she became the chair of the Foundation's Titan Missile Museum Committee which provided oversight for the design and construction of the Count Ferdinand von Galen Education and Research Center for the Titan Missile Museum. Two years later, she was appointed director of the museum.

Yvonne has appeared on several history and tourism themed television shows, including *Secret A-Bomb Factories* for the History Channel, and *Arizona Highways* and *California's Gold* with Huell Howser. In her spare time, she is writing a book on the Cold War and the Titan II missile system.

About the Titan Missile Museum

The Titan Missile Museum is operated by the Arizona Aerospace Foundation and located in Sahuarita, Arizona, approximately 20 minutes south of downtown Tucson. At the Titan Missile Museum, visitors tour a former operational Titan II Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) site. During the Cold War, this former missile launch facility was one of the deadliest weapons in the United States' nuclear arsenal. Decommissioned in 1982, the launch facility has been preserved as the only museum of its kind in the world. It was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1994.

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Full Name: Yvonne Carol Morris

U.S. Air Force: October 1980 to August 1985

Rank at separation: Captain

Points of Interest:

1. What were the performance parameters of the Titan II and what was Titan II missile combat crew duty like?

--Largest ICBM ever deployed by the United States

--First liquid propellant missile to be launched from underground

--First liquid propellant missile to have its propellant stored on board the missile at all times, reducing its launch time to 58 seconds

--Carried the 9-megaton W-53 warhead. The fireball created by a W-53 detonation would reach 3 miles in diameter.

--Alert schedules for crews

--Performance standards for the crews (anything less than a 90% score meant you failed)

--Duties of the missile crews

2. What was it like to be a woman in a predominantly male career field?

The only time I ever felt I was treated differently was when the Wing was undergoing a command evaluation. I had strep throat and had been grounded by the flight surgeon because I was taking cough medicine with codeine. The night before the evaluation started, by squadron commander called me at home and asked me when I'd last taken the cough syrup. He ordered me to stop taking the cough medicine and to report for alert duty the next day. He had it on good authority that the evaluators were looking for a crew with a female crew commander to select for evaluation, and he wanted it to be my crew. I'd been a crew commander for less than 3 months. My crew reported for alert duty next day, and were pulled out of the pre-departure briefing by the evaluators. For two days we were tested, with me giving orders in a whisper. We aced the evaluation with a perfect score.